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Mr. Disbrow has accomplished with signal success. Of course it is possible to pick a few flaws in the work. Some matters might have been elaborated a little more fully, and the value of the book as a practical guide thereby increased. So, too, in a few instances, the author's carefully sought-after brevity tends to mislead the reader. Considering the volume as a whole, however, and in view of the difficulties besetting the task, the writer is certainly to be commended. In the short space of one hundred and fifty pages he has presented an excellent summary of the New York Code; a summary which not only is entirely adequate for the needs of the law student, but also conveys a clear idea of the main principles of this very complex subject. E. S. T.

COMMENTARIES ON THE LAW OF NEGLIGENCE. By Seymour D. Thompson. Vols. I. and II. Indianapolis: The Bowen-Merrill Co. 1901. pp. lvii, 1254; li, 1134. 8vo.

In this work the author intends to treat of negligence in all its relations. Two volumes are now at hand, the first of which contains statements of general principles, together with their common applications, while the second treats of the negligence of Railway and Telegraph Companies. Four volumes are to follow.

In the law of torts it is especially true that many rules of substantive law have been based on forms of procedure now practically obsolete. Moreover, the volume of decided cases has become so enormous, and their results have been so variant, and so largely based on their individual facts, that their mere enumeration affords little assistance towards a uniform statement of principles. In a work of such magnitude as the present it was to be hoped that the author would undertake the task, which most text writers leave untouched, of suggesting some broad, rational principles which would cover ground now broken into separate divisions by petty, irrational distinctions. Such a work might do much to free the courts from subserviency to the results of obsolete forms of procedure, and to guide them to a simpler and more uniform statement of the law. This hope, however, is disappointed by these volumes. The author formulates no guiding principle to run through the entire book, and even in his treatment of the law of specific subjects, except for here and there a keen suggestion, generally contents himself with enumerating conflicting views, as for example where he treats of recovery for mental anguish caused by the negligence of telegraph companies. In the development or simplification of the law, then, the book can have little effect.

On the other hand, the law, as commonly understood, is clearly stated, and many subjects newly brought before the courts are treated. The compilation of authorities is exhaustive, as the author expects to cite at least 35,000 cases before the work is consummated. A large number of cases are concisely abstracted. As the book, therefore, contains such material as is usually embodied both in the ordinary text-book and in the digest, revised in accord with the latest decisions, it should temporarily, at least, be found highly useful for reference.

THE HISTORY OF THE LEGISLATION CONCERNING REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY IN ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF QUEEN VICTORIA. By J. E. R. de Villiers. Being the Yorke Prize Essay for the year 1900. London: C. J. Clay and Sons. 1901. pp. xix, 236. 12mo.

To produce a work of any material value to other than the casual reader upon such a subject as that of the present essay requires an immense amount of careful and well-directed labor. And at the same time to confine the result within the necessarily narrow limits of a prize essay renders the task infinitely more difficult. Nevertheless it is hardly too much to say that Mr. de Villiers has produced a valuable as well as an exceedingly readable book. The essay, however, is not of importance as presenting any new views or even any previously inac-

cessible material; practically everything to be found in it has been said before, though all has not been so well said. But it is valuable in that it presents clearly and concisely the history of a tremendous struggle, or rather of a series of tremendous struggles. It is difficult to realize the extent of the reforms worked in Real Property and Commercial law during this century, and it is only when one has all these improvements noted together that he can understand how much he owes to the patient and often unrewarded effort of such men as Lord Brougham, Judge Chalmers, and others whose names are less familiar, but who are scarcely less deserving of veneration.

If any adverse criticism can be made upon the present work it is that in that portion dealing with real property the author at times seems to pass from one point to another in a way that is rather confusing to the reader. But the greater part is open to no such objection; on the contrary, it is singularly well arranged. A trifling error is to be found on page 101, where the author states that by the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1883, agricultural machinery is exempt from distress. By section 45 of the Act, however, it appears that only *bona fide* hired agricultural machinery is exempt. On the whole the book is well worth reading.

F. R. T.

THE LAW OF CONTRACTS. By Edward Avery Harriman. Second Edition. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1901. pp. liv, 410, 8vo.

As the excellence of this work has been very generally recognized, it is scarcely necessary to do more than note the changes which have been made since the first edition. The size of the book has been considerably enlarged and citations of the recent cases have been added, while duplicate reference has been made to the National Reporter System. The arrangement has been somewhat altered, and the chapters on the nature of contractual obligations and the history of contractual actions transferred to an appendix. A slight change in the author's views as to various doctrines, notably those of the "substantial performance" of conditions and the right of a beneficiary to sue on a contract, are indicated by the following words in the preface: "In the present edition, the importance of logic as tending toward certainty and stability in the law has not been underestimated; but greater liberality has been shown in the treatment of decisions which are the results of those other forces in the law to which logic so readily yields." The faults of the book are those which necessarily flow from an attempt at a complete view of the subject in a very small space. Although many books would not gain by being less concise, yet in this case occasional obscurities might be removed, and a fuller statement of the reasons for the author's opinion on disputed points of theory would be of great interest. It should be said, however, that the book, as it stands, contains considerable discussion of fundamental principles.

A COMPILATION OF THE BAR EXAMINATION QUESTIONS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK. Edited by Wilson Brice. Albany: Matthew Bender. 1901. pp. 229.

Full half the difficulty — and the terror — of an examination is in not knowing what is to be expected from the examiner. Thus such a book as this present volume is of great aid in preparing for the New York Bar Examinations. Some six hundred actual questions asked within the last five years are given, together with the answers to the same. The answers are not always given outright, for not seldom there is merely a reference to the particular case on which the question is based. This is an excellent plan, since it requires the student to get his knowledge at first hand. The answers which are given in the text, although concisely stated wherever any important principle of law is involved, contain so much of a suggestion of that principle as is necessary to put the reader on the proper track. The Rules for Admission of Attorneys in New York State, and the Rules Regulating Law Examinations are appended. To the student who is preparing for the New York Bar Examination this little volume ought certainly to be a ready help.

E. S. T.